

The League of *Extraordinary Seniors*



Pearl Hunt

For many Maryland seniors, Pearl Hunt is the Cal Ripken Jr. of the State's Aging Network. She was there in 1961 at the very first White House Conference on Aging (WHCoA) and she returned to the White House last year, in 2011 – 50 years later – for a ceremony honoring volunteers in the Aging community. To be accurate, the official White House Conferences aren't really held in the chief executive's mansion; they're organized by the Executive Office of the President once every decade to make policy recommendations to the President and Congress regarding the aged. But Hunt really did set foot on those hallowed grounds on July 13, 2011, for a White House Event on Senior Volunteerism and Community Service. She was one of six seniors recognized for their commitment to transforming lives and communities through volunteer efforts.

A lifelong nurse, Hunt has been a member of the Montgomery County Long Term Care Ombudsman Program since 2004. While speaking on a panel during her visit to the White House, Hunt identified abuse and neglect as the major dilemmas facing nursing homes and assisted living facilities today. She has led the rallying cry against abuse and neglect for years, even way back in 1961 when she was a nursing home administrator. Hunt acknowledged there was little oversight of nursing home facilities back then, saying "A nursing home's doors were locked, and if they wanted you in, you were in, and if they wanted you out, you were out." Fast forward to the 21st century and Hunt is still working to improve conditions for nursing home residents. She is a fixture on Capitol Hill and a committed volunteer member of Montgomery County's ombudsman team.

"What makes the ombudsmen unique is that they are not part of the nursing home staff. They are independent, and their role is to work with and on behalf of the residents," explained Alice Hedt, the Maryland State Ombudsman.

Whether she is working from the inside of the system or pushing from without, we can count on Pearl Hunt to advocate on behalf of Maryland nursing home residents, no matter what.



Department of Aging